



The President's Daily Brief

28 December 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In north Laos, the Communists are repositioning and resupplying their troops north and east of Long Tieng. In the south, government forces have abandoned Paksong under heavy enemy pressure. (Page 1)

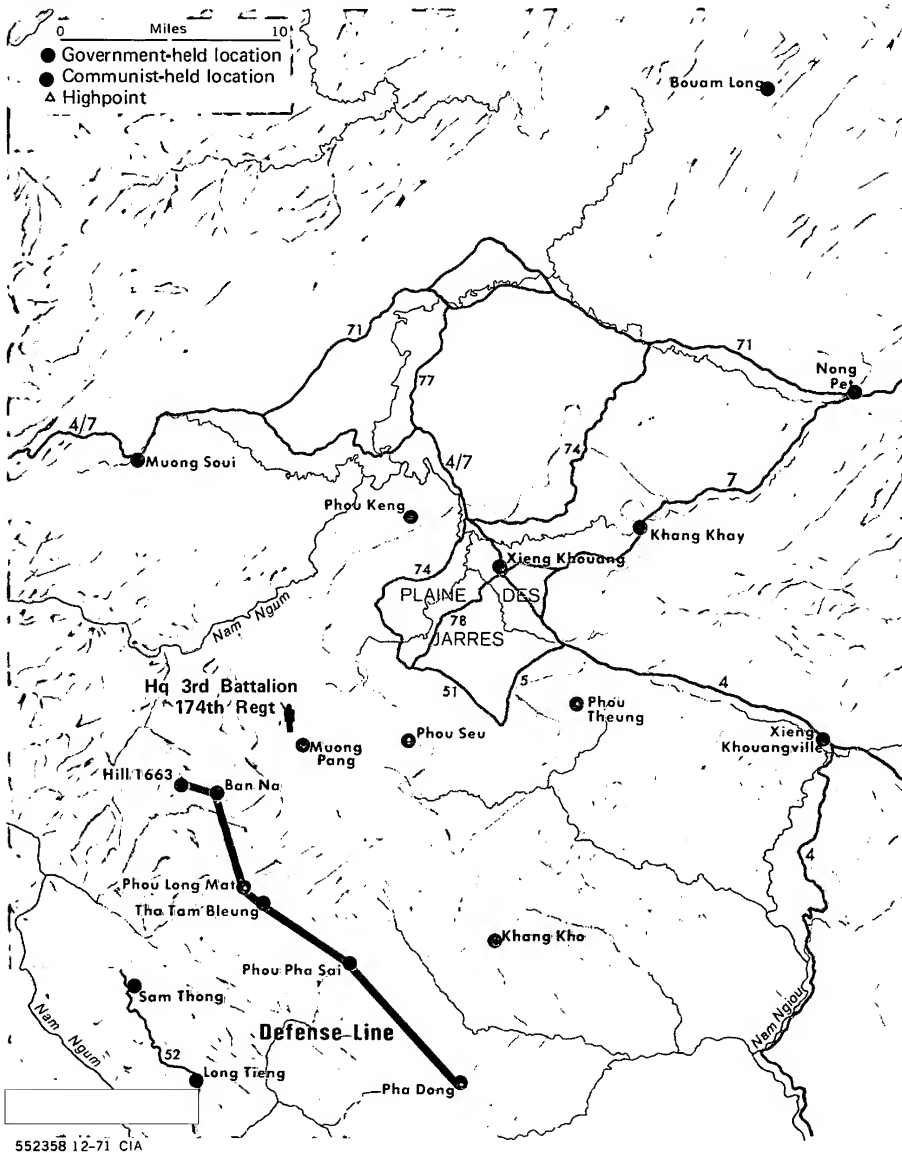


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The danger of communal violence persists in both Bangla Desh and Pakistan. (Page 3)

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LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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LAOS

The North Vietnamese are continuing to reposition and resupply their forces north and east of the Long Tieng complex. At least one battalion of the 174th Regiment, 316th Division, has moved into the area northeast of Ban Na, where units of the 866th Independent Regiment had already been noted. Air observers report very heavy enemy activity around Muong Pang and on the southwestern edges of the Plaine des Jarres.

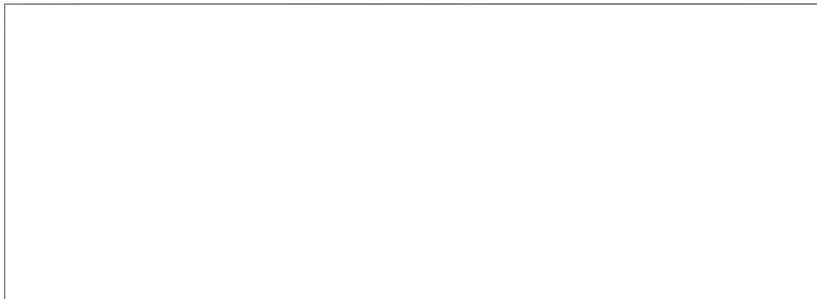
The activity around Muong Pang may foreshadow a thrust by elements of the 316th Division toward the eastern end of the government's defensive line around Long Tieng. The Muong Pang area is honeycombed with caves the North Vietnamese have used in the past to protect supplies and troops.

A lengthy propaganda statement by Hanoi extolling the victory of the "Lao Liberation Forces" makes no reference to Communist goals beyond the Plaine nor to Long Tieng itself. This suggests that the Communists are not sure they can take Long Tieng and thus do not want to commit themselves publicly to this objective.

In south Laos yesterday, government forces abandoned the town of Paksong under heavy enemy pressure. The North Vietnamese had undertaken an extensive buildup of troops, supported by tanks and antiaircraft artillery, just north of the town over the past few days, and had isolated government units and limited resupply and medical evacuation operations.

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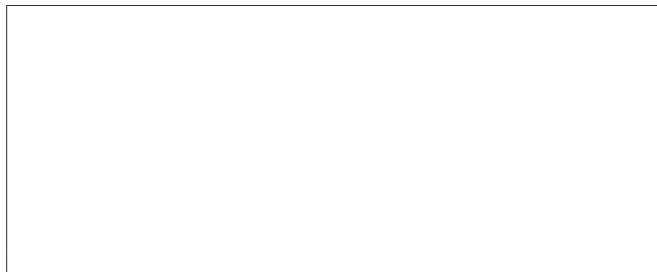
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PAKISTAN - BANGLA DESH

The Bangla Desh government has announced plans for organizing the country's armed forces. According to Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad, the Mukti Bahini regulars--most of whom are ex-members of Pakistani military or paramilitary units--are to form the core of Bangla Desh's regular armed forces. The Mukti Bahini irregulars will be incorporated into a national militia that will be used in reconstruction efforts. Guerrillas are also to be given preference in staffing the new police force.

The government is anxious to bring the Mukti Bahini under its control before Bangla Desh's image has been further tarnished by guerrilla reprisals against suspected collaborators. Although Mukti Bahini and criminal elements have been terrorizing minority groups in some localities, the presence of the Indian Army has helped prevent a province-wide bloodbath. The Mukti Bahini remain armed, however, and the Indians will not be on the scene indefinitely. Many guerrillas are of doubtful loyalty to the new government and remain eager for revenge.

The Bengali minority in West Pakistan is also living under the threat of violence from West Pakistanis frustrated by their country's recent defeat and angered by reports of Bengali reprisals in the east. Anti-Bengali incidents have already been reported in the Karachi area, and President Bhutto has appealed to the populace to refrain from such actions.

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The new Pakistani cabinet agreed on 24 December that Bangla Desh President Mujibur Rahman should be released, [redacted] Bhutto--who began a series of talks with Mujib yesterday-- [redacted]

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Bhutto almost certainly realizes that neither Mujib's fellow Bengalis nor the Indians would go along with any such scheme.

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